

disappears just near the lumbar zone. No black patch is present on the lower eyelid. Alternate whitish and blackish bands are present on the dorsal side of the distal end of the tail. This colour form seems larger than the other two colour forms.

It is a well-established fact that, just after mating, males lose their scarlet coloration quickly, but the black patches remain (Sharma 1998). From May 7, 2002 to June 14, 2002, while studying the colour pattern of the male *C. versicolor* on the Alwar-Behror Road in Alwar district, many trampled specimens were observed and it was found that males lose

their breeding colours after death. Although a light tinge of scarlet colour can be seen after death, no black colour is visible.

Photographic evidence for the morphs has been provided.

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### 15. RECORD OF *BOIGA BEDDOMEI* (WALL 1909) FROM SRIHARIKOTA, ANDHRA PRADESH, INDIA<sup>1</sup>

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On March 30, 2004, while carrying out herpetofaunal sampling in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh, we recorded a greenish cat snake in a Casuarina plantation. The plantation, raised as a shelter belt, was c. 300 m from the Bay of Bengal. The average tree height was 19 m, with about 90% canopy and 100% litter cover. The snake was recorded under a huge pile of palm leaves accumulated under a *Borassus flabellifer* tree with a fallen Casuarina tree heaped with dense accumulated litter and a 3.5 m shrub to the side of the pile.

Sriharikota is a spindle shaped island (c. 181 sq. km), situated largely in the Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh (with a portion of its southern part in Tiruvallur district of Tamil Nadu), bounded on the east by the Bay of Bengal and on the west, north and south by the Pulicat lake (461 sq. km). The island is acknowledged to have one of the last, largest, and best-preserved patches of Tropical Dry Evergreen Forest in India (Sastry and Rao 1973; Blasco and Legris 1973; Meher-Homji 1974). Beside its natural forest, the island has plantations of Eucalyptus, Casuarina and Cashew, covering 21% of the landmass. The island has been under the control of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) since the

early 1970s, while the forest and its wildlife are protected. The nearest major forest to Sriharikota is the Eastern Ghats, running about 100 km to the west.

The snake was 88 cm in total length with a snout-vent length of 68.6 cm. The dorsal region was dull green with distinct black horizontal bars. The throat was white with a yellow border, and the entire ventral region was deep yellow. A dark streak ran from the back of the eye to the neck. The eyes were large, with a greenish-brown iris and a black, vertical pupil. It had 8 supralabials with the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> touching the eye; body scale row of 19:19:13; ventrals 248, and 106 subcaudals. (Some of the body measurements are: eye = 3.22 mm; distance between eye & nostril = 3.22 mm; distance between nostril and snout = 1.88 mm; head length = 18.27 mm and head width = 12.7 mm). Voucher specimen was deposited in the BNHS Collection (Regn. No. BNHS 3343).

The snake was identified as *Boiga beddomei* (Wall 1909), supposedly endemic to the Western Ghats and Sri Lanka (Smith 1943). The species was not listed in the faunal list of the eastern region of India, which includes *B. forsteni* (Dumeril,

Bibron & Dumeril 1854), *B. multifasciata* (Blyth 1861), *B. nuchalis* (Gunther 1875), *B. ochraceus* (Gunther 1868) and *B. trigonatus* (Schneider 1802) (Molur and Walker 1998). Our record of the *Boiga beddomei* in the insular, coastal forest of Sriharikota, 100 km east of the Eastern Ghats that is contiguous with the Western Ghats, suggests that the species may possibly also occur in the Eastern Ghats.

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16. *MICRIXALUS FUSCUS* (ANURA: MICRIXALIDAE) IN SHARAVATHI RIVER BASIN, KARNATAKA<sup>1</sup>

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*Micrixalus fuscus* (Boulenger 1882) is endemic to the Western Ghats (Chanda 2002). Inger *et al.* (1984) recorded this species from the Ponnudi hill range in Kerala (9° 55' N, 77° 05' E), whereas Vasudevan *et al.* (2001) observed them in the Kalakkad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve, Tamil Nadu (8° 25' - 8° 53' N, 77° 10' - 77° 35' E).

Eight individuals of *M. fuscus* were recorded from Niluvase (13° 44' 18" N, 75° 06' 30" E; 692 m above msl) during the ecological status assessment studies at the Sharavathi River Basin on November 6, 2003. This species was found in the small rocky crevices in the flowing perennial streamlet covered with leaf litter in evergreen forest (water depth: 78.33 ± 10.41 mm; water temperature: 22° C; air temperature: 23° C). They were observed to jump quickly from one rocky surface to another on disturbance, and to hide in the crevices. The vegetation included *Mastixia arborea*, *Ventilago madraspatana*, *Aglaiia* sp. and *Agrostistachys indica*. A specimen was deposited at the National Zoological Collections of Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata (Regn. No. A9865).

*Micrixalus fuscus* is a small, brown torrent frog (snout vent length: 19.34 ± 2.3 mm). Its finger and toe tips are dilated into small discs. The webbing is more than ¾ in its foot. The

distinct features of this species are tibio-tarsal articulation reaching between eye and snout, indistinct tympanum and strongly overlapping hind limbs (when folded at right angles to the body).

The entire dorsum is dark reddish brown. A blackish inverted 'V' on the mid-dorsum and also between the eyes was observed in two specimens. Dorsolateral fold is with dark brown or with white dots. The lateral band is black and extends up to the groin. Limbs are cross-barred. Brown reticulation was noticed on the ventral side up to the abdomen and a light white strip from the anus to the knee joint.

Other species found in the region during the field survey were *Nyctibatrachus major*, *Indirana semipalmatus*, *Euphlyctis cyanophlyctis*, *Sphaerotherca rufescens*, *Philautus* sp. and *Sylvirana* sp.

This record of *M. fuscus* from the Sharavathi River Basin is the first record from Karnataka with an extended range of 13-14° N in the Western Ghats, as there was no previous record from Karnataka.

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